



HĀ Assessment for Learning Project: Executive Summary

The purpose of this project is to identify the key conditions and indicators for success along an educational pathway that supports community, college and career readiness. At the completion of this two year pilot, the Department of Education (Department) will have its first valid and culturally responsive assessment framework for the Nā Hopena A’o (HĀ) outcomes set by Board of Education policy E.3. This presents an opportunity to inform and shape future accountability practices in accordance with our state’s strategic priorities and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The Department applied for a national grant to support this work, was selected from 148 applicants and was awarded \$199,800. This competitive grant is provided by the Center for Innovation in Education and the Next Generation Learning Challenges with funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Office for Hawaiian Education (OHE) and a HĀ Assessment Learning Project (ALP) team will guide a collaborative process to design and test a new HĀ assessment framework. This process will 1) learn from students, teachers, principals, district and state administrators, family and community members together and 2) add an indigenous Hawaiian lens for determining the learning environments that best lead to desired outcomes.

The ALP team will be advised by Hawai’i and national evaluation and assessment experts from REL Pacific, one of the Regional Educational Laboratories established by the U.S. DOE’s Institute of Education Sciences, the Hawai’i Chapter of the Chicago-based Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA), and the national Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC).

Hawai’i offers a rich context for learning about culturally responsive education in support of other communities that also face widening achievement gaps among its students. A group of pilot sites have been identified at school, complex and state-level because of their readiness to engage with HĀ as early adopters. The ALP Hawai’i team will critically examine how culture is impacting the learning environment at these pilot sites and share its findings with a peer network of ALP grantees and educators outside of Hawai’i. In this way many communities can consider their own cultural contexts as places of strength and a foundational means to create new educational pathways leading to shared outcomes.

In summary, this project will advance our understanding of assessment’s essential role in the learning process to better prepare all our students for success. Through a creative process design, a reliance on Hawai’i’s community and an outcomes framework grounded in place, the Department hopes to support learning models that are more personalized, competency-based and student-centered.

HĀ Assessment for Learning Project

Hawai'i State Department of Education

Project Idea

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) is piloting a proficiency-based pathway to prepare more students for college, career and community in Hawai'i and beyond. Data and assessment currently guide improvement in the Department; however, this request is to fund a special two-year project for learning what the key indicators for success look like along this kind of pathway. Rather than only rely on a top-down, centralized reform approach, the Department envisions this project as a unique opportunity to design and test a process that 1) learns from students, teachers, principals, district and state administrators, family and community members together and 2) adds an indigenous Hawaiian lens for determining what conditions best lead to a brand new set of learning outcomes.

The catalyst for this effort was the unanimous approval on June 2015 by the State of Hawai'i Board of Education (BOE) of a set of interdependent learning outcomes for use throughout the K-12 public education system. These outcomes entitled Nā Hopena A'ō or HĀ are uniquely grounded in Hawaiian values, language, culture and history. They are six outcomes that include a sense of Belonging, Responsibility, Excellence, Aloha, Total Wellbeing and Hawai'i. Taken together, they are the BREATH needed to strengthen students, staff, and their support networks - as a whole system.

By creating a broad set of learning outcomes, this policy (E.3) is the first step in determining competencies that equate to college, career and community readiness. It also represents the potential to prototype a proficiency based advancement pathway using standards of academic achievement alongside socio-emotional progress and character development. For the first time, the Department can strategically align practice to policy by opening up the design process to be more collaborative with schools and communities.

Hawai'i is the only state with a single State Educational Agency (SEA) and Local Educational Agency (LEA) structure. Herein lies an implication to scale system-wide and an ability to affect over 13,000 teachers and 180,000 students or 84.2% of the total K-12 student population in Hawai'i.

This two-year project will produce working relationships, tested models, and indicators of success resulting in the state's first culturally-responsive assessment framework. This process will be necessary for the state to adopt any new accountability strategies in the future. Resourcing this effort through special funds expedites a set of results not otherwise possible that can inform the state-level strategic planning process over the next two years. Without this funding, Hawai'i also does not have the benefit of peer learning with other similar proficiency-based efforts nationally.

This project will fall under the leadership of the Office for Hawaiian Education (OHE), newly established in BOE policy. Its Director reports to the Superintendent and is part of the senior leadership team to ensure alignment of its work across all other departments. The HĀ Assessment Learning Project (ALP) team will guide the collaborative process for a new assessment framework based on HĀ. This completed framework can be used in diverse learning environments to indicate strengthening levels of proficiency.

Learning

Due to the lack of existing culturally responsive assessments, the Department needs ways to assess HĀ outcomes that are culturally grounded in Hawai'i. Our hypothesis is that if we develop initial indicators of success across different proficiency levels **from a Hawaiian context**, then through this Hawaiian lens we will see more examples of learning environments that lead to stronger HĀ outcomes. Armed with an understanding of these necessary conditions, the project team will produce a culturally-responsive framework for assessment. Given the recent reauthorization by Congress of the ESSA, this assessment could change the current accountability system to recognize student achievement as inclusive of whole child development.

Our project incorporates three key principles learned from E.3 policy-making. This work holds deeply the belief that Hawai'i is the core foundation for our learning. Thus, the ALP team will examine native assessment sources found in local, national and international contexts as well as non-native sources. Understanding that HĀ already exists, the ALP team will determine initial indicators of success and assessment practices drawn from current and past examples of HĀ in practice. Finally, our model of leadership is based on the Hawaiian understanding and practice of 'ohana. This ensures we act as a cohesive force and manifest genuine community spirit for mutual benefit.

The role of the project team is to convene and listen for mo'olelo (generative story telling) as told by students, teachers, families, principals, administrators, kūpuna (elders) and community members. It is their collective stories that allow for an assessment model to emerge that is inclusive and representative of actual experience and wisdom. Pilot sites have been targeted at school, complex, district and state levels so that the cycle of design, test, learn and repeat can take place in multiple learning environments. The HĀ ALP team will:

Level 1: Mo'olelo Research

- a. Develop a research agenda including prioritizing research questions and adopting research methods that can best address research priorities. Include research topics that center around mo'olelo that help us understand evaluation and assessment from a native lens.
- b. Conduct research on culturally responsive systems of measurement from native and non-native lenses

Level 2: Mo'olelo of Practice

- c. Draw on the knowledge base of current practitioners including teachers to understand contexts in which HĀ outcomes are most clearly demonstrated vs. contexts in which they are not exhibited
- d. Design an initial set of success indicators and assessment practices to be used by target test sites that represent program, school, complex, district and state level of implementation

Level 3: Mo'olelo in Practice

- a. Structure organizational learning with multiple test sites
- b. Conceptualize and measure differences in student's and teachers' understanding of and internalization of HĀ outcomes across different proficiency levels

Level 4: Living Mo'olelo

- a. Refine the set of indicators and assessments that have shown strongest results toward a short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes set
- b. Present findings including a culturally-responsive assessment framework using diverse communication strategies designed to help others reach their own next-level of practice

Grant resources will be used to provide technical, strategic, and leadership support to OHE over a twenty-four-month time frame for its Assessment for Learning Project. [See Budget]

As a result of the project, we hope to learn more about the following:

- Can we measure for community readiness?
- What indicators best determine community readiness?
- Are group measures (as opposed to individual measures) valid indicators of success?
- Can community cohesion and group achievement be assessed along side individual accomplishments?
- How do we demonstrate success so more people adopt the outcomes and assessment framework?

Impact

Culture is an important factor in many aspects of education including curriculum, instruction, administration, or assessments. Wilson (2001)¹ notes that current research and assessment methodology rests on a set of dominant, often Western paradigms that are incongruent with indigenous/native worldviews. Though the data collected can have value, the worthiness of the conclusions drawn from them are questionable if not antithetical to native epistemologies. Aligned with this argument is Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999)² groundbreaking work, “Decolonizing Methodologies”. She contends that if research and assessment are to be of worth to indigenous communities, the methods used to develop and deliver such must be decolonized so that the tools, data collected and analyzed, as well as how the conclusions are reported coincide with native systems.

Hawai’i offers a rich context for learning about culturally responsive education in support of other communities that also face widening achievement gaps among its students. Our K-12 students reflect the state’s and the nation’s racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and linguistic diversity. Among Hawaii’s public school students, 51% are eligible for free-or-reduced lunch, and 7% are English-language learners. Hawaii’s immigration history has contributed to a high level of ethnic diversity, and there is no majority population in the system as a whole. Native Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian indigenous students, however, comprise the largest ethnic group in the state’s K-12 schools at 28%, with Filipinos following at 21% of the Hawai’i’s student population. Hawai’i also has the largest population of Asian/Pacific Islander elementary and secondary school students.

Currently the following sites were targeted because they are early adopters of the HĀ outcomes framework:
 (*Estimated per pilot group)

Pilot Group	Students*	Faculty*
Ho’ola Leadership Academy, Kapolei, O’ahu	50	5
James B. Castle High School, Kāne’ohe, O’ahu	50	5
Ke Kula Kaiapuni ‘o Ānuenuenu, Honolulu, O’ahu	400	40
Ke Kula ‘o ‘Ehunuikaimalino, Kealahou, Hawai’i Island	225	20
Kapa’a-Kaua’i-Waimea Complex Area, Kaua’i	9,332	311
Ka’ū- Kea’au-Pāhoa Complex Area, Hawai’i Island	5,621	187
Maui District, Maui Island	21,163	705
State-level Aspiring Leaders Program	0	30

¹ Wilson, S. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2001) A Case of Successful Teaching Policy: Connecticut’s Long-Term Efforts To Improve Teaching and Learning. A Research Report. *Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy*. Washington, Seattle: ERIC ED 475 448.
² Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. New York, NY: Palgrave.

By critically examining how culture is impacting the learning environment at these pilot sites, the ALP team hopes to share its findings outside of Hawai'i especially with a peer network of ALP grantees. Other potential examples of national presentations include the National Indian Education Association and the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluations and Assessments (CREA) Conference. In this way other communities can consider their own cultural contexts as places of strength and a foundational means to create new educational pathways leading to shared outcomes.

Readiness

OHE recently completed its 3-year Delivery Plan for Policy E.3. This Delivery Plan is connected to the current Department Strategic Plan and evaluates tri-level success- student, staff and systems. Key enabling activities in this plan through 2018 related to this project include: 1) HĀ-based Community Engagement Framework for School and Complex Areas, 2) HĀ-based Leadership (Teacher and Administrator) Training & Evaluation System and 3) Systems Alignment to Nā Hopena A'o.

The HĀ ALP is aligned to this plan but allows for the addition of training and expertise beyond the capability of current staff and state funding. OHE seeks to include special skills and expertise on its ALP team such as facilitative leadership, culturally-responsive evaluation and assessments, collective impact design, systems-level thinking and community engagement strategies.

Members of the core ALP team have all been involved with the development of a comprehensive Hawaiian Education pathway since the start of the policy-making process three years ago up until the most recently completed OHE Delivery Planning process. They include the following:

- Dawn Kau'ilani Sang, Director of the Office of Hawaiian Education and ALP Leader. She continues to advocate for public education and Hawaiian language immersion education, was formerly a Hawaiian language immersion classroom teacher, resource teacher and educational specialist. She holds an M.Ed in Curriculum Studies from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and attributes her success to her Hawaiian parents who instilled in her from early on, a strong sense of 'ohana and community.
- Jessica Worchel, interim Educational Specialist in the Office of Education and ALP Manager. She is former Chief of Staff to the Superintendent and a key member of Hawai'i's Race to the Top leadership team. Ms. Worchel also served as project manager to revamp the WASC Senior Commission accreditation model for higher education institutions. She is founding Board Chair for Peace Child International and is currently involved with planning for the next World Youth Congress in Hawai'i. She received an MA from American University in International Peace and Conflict Resolution and a BA in Communications from the University of Hawaii, Mānoa.
- Dr. Kalehua Krug, Educational Specialist for the OHE and ALP Team Member. Dr. Krug is former faculty and Assistant Specialist for the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i (UH) at Mānoa. Dr. Krug was formerly the Principal Investigator for the Department and UH Mānoa Hawaiian Language Standards and Assessment Project. He also serves as a member of the State Public School Charter Commission. Much of his work focuses on the research and development of appropriate methods of curriculum construction, assessment and teacher education for Ka Papahana Kaiapuni, Hawaiian Immersion Schools.

- Cheryl Ka'uhane Lupenui, Founder and Principal of The Leader Project, an indigenous leadership practice and ALP Designer and Lead Facilitator. As former Hawai'i State Board of Education (BOE) member, Ms. Lupenui worked with communities on BOE Policy E-3 establishing Nā Hopena A'o (HĀ) and the current BOE Strategic Plan 2013-2018. As a member of Hawai'i P-20 Advisory Board, she helped create the definition for College, Career, and Community Readiness in Hawai'i. She currently serves as a charter member establishing a Hawai'i Chapter for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (HI-CREA). Ms. Lupenui studied International Business at the University of Hawai'i and McGill University in Montreal, and her Masters in Business Administration is from Tulane University.

An advisory group to the HĀ ALP will provide evaluation and assessment technical expertise throughout the project time-line. Current members include:

- Dr. Phillip Herman, REL Pacific Director who has extensive expertise in educational research and development. Herman served as Director of Research at the Center for Urban Education at the University of Pittsburgh where he was a research faculty member in the Department of Learning Sciences and Policy.
- Dr. Priscilla Maynor, Founder and Principal at imaginED Partners. Dr. Maynor is a systems-focused education strategist, innovation design partner and collaborator.. Her current work is focused on personalized learning and next generation learning initiatives funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. As a Native American, she has an affinity for work in indigenous and underserved communities. Dr. Maynor is also an adjunct faculty member in Educational Leadership at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She was formerly the EVP for leadership development and shared learning systems at the Center for Educational Leadership and Technology and a long-time educational leader at the state education agency in North Carolina
- Dr. Walter Kahumoku III, Director of the Kauhale Kīpaipai (Educator Professional Development) department of the Kamehameha Schools. Dr. Kahumoku is an Adjunct Professor in the UH, College of Education, where he teaches courses in research methods, school-community relations, adult learning styles, management theory and application, and others courses in educational administration and foundations.
- Dr. Matt Coleman, Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer of the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC). Dr. Coleman is an early proponent for Community, Career, and College readiness and provides expertise in policy and practice alignment and the alignment of multiple measures including input, process and outcomes measures.

In the same way we are planning assessments from a Hawaiian context, the ALP team sees indigenous ways of teaching to follow. For example, we see growing use of mo'olelo and mo'okū'auhau (genealogy) as fundamental instructional practice and 'āina (native land) serving as teacher, classroom, and indicator of success through the reciprocal process of being served by schools and communities. Local funders are already helping to shift teaching practice into this area through their funding strategies.

Attached is the BOE E.3. policy and the HĀ Outcomes framework and narrative as evidence of the work that guides our Assessment for Learning Project.